

12th

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African American and 7.9 percent Native American.

It would include most of the heavily-black areas of Charlotte, and Union, Anson, Richmond and Robeson counties.

The current 12th District snakes along I-85 to Durham.

However, Democrats, including District Judges Dickson Phillips and Earl Britt, said redrawing districts now would be too disruptive.

Tuesday's ruling will be challenged by Durham lawyer Robinson Everett, who brought the lawsuit leading to the Supreme Court's May ruling that the 12th District violated the constitution because it was based "solely" on achieving a black majority.

Everett was planning Wednesday to petition the U.S. Supreme Court to order N.C. congressional districts redrawn immediately.

Watt and fellow N.C. African American representative Eva Clayton sent affidavits to the judges' panel, which held a hearing Monday on whether to redraw districts before or after the November election.

In arguing for delaying redistricting, Watt told the court, "A new district will be more likely to generate opposition in the primary for an incumbent, because it will include those new constituents who have not been represented by the incumbent before."

"In order to effectively educate voters about the candidates, their records, and their views, the incumbent will have to establish lines of communication with the new voters in the district," Watt said. "New constituents deserve ample time to evaluate the voting and performance record of a candidate who has previously served a different constituency."

Watt cited the high concentration of poor and under-educated voters in the current 12th District.

"Candidates will have to be especially aggressive in communicating with these voters

to inform them of which district they have been assigned to," Watt said. "If candidates do not have sufficient time to disseminate information about the new districts and candidates, voters will be confused about who is running and who they can vote for."

"Scheduling a quick election with little notice either to candidates or voters would lead to substantial confusion and probably would result in severe restriction of the number of constituents who actually vote."

Watt also pointed out that a runoff, if required after the primary, would further compound the problems of a shortened election period.

In addition, Watt said: "I have 450 active constituent service case files in which my office is handling federal issues for constituents who live in the 12th District. An abrupt change in districts will result in hardship to these constituents in that the files and casework of those who are no longer in the 12th District would have to be assumed by a new representative and the

continuity of services to those constituents would almost certainly be impacted."

Until two majority-black districts were drawn for the 1992 elections, from which Watt and Eva Clayton were elected to the U.S. House, no African American had served in the Congress from North Carolina since 1901. Clayton's 1st District was untouched by the court and remains essentially the same under the House plan. That district would also lose its black majority. African Americans of voting age would be 47.4 percent of the 1st District.

Redrawing districts could involve substantial cost to the state, as much as \$2 million for a new round of primaries.

"You have to redo everybody, everybody's district would change," House Rules Committee counsel Linwood Jones said last week. "You would have to have candidates file again, and hold new primaries for the election."

Jones also noted that Texas, where a majority black district was thrown out along with the 12th district, is redrawing district lines.

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